EVERY OTHER SUNDAY

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THE KNIGHT OF THE HOLY GRAIL.

BY KATE L. BROWN.

THE supper bell had rung twice, but still the boys failed to put in an appearance. Aunt Martha began to worry, as usual, and Uncle Ambrose looked grave disapproval over the top of his evening paper.

"Now, mamma," said Arline, laughing, "don't waste your precious strength fretting over those boys. They always turn up all right."

"But you know how far away from their parents they are," murmured auntie, apologetically, "and if anything *should* happen —"

"You haven't seen the latest acquisition to our menagerie, Grace;" and Arline turned to Miss Stewart, the family friend who had just arrived for a long visit.

"No, I have not even been informed who they are," replied Miss Grace.

"They are Uncle Edward's boys; and we are keeping them for a year while their parents are abroad. Clive is a lovely fellow, so graceful and sweet-tempered, but Maurice is a perfect bear. It is a mystery how two such handsome, distinguished people as Uncle Edward and Aunt Magdalen could have such an awkward, ill-tempered child."

"Dear me," said Grace, lifting her pretty brows, "you are certainly not flattering."

"Wait, and see for yourself," retorted Arline, good-naturedly.

At this moment the door opened, and a slender, handsome lad of fourteen stepped in, with a cheery "good-evening." Clive Lancaster was certainly a bonny boy, with his sparkling blue eyes and curly, golden head. He was introduced to Grace, and conducted himself so easily that one could scarcely help being pleased with him.

"Where is Maurice, my lad?" inquired his uncle.

"Oh, he's just behind, he'll be in soon, — gone to lock the boat-house," was Clive's easy reply.

Mr. Lancaster's face flushed. "Careless fellow," he muttered; "so you boys forget to lock the house and have to go back half a mile to do it. Next thing you'll forget it altogether, and some one will get in and damage my property, as they did last year."

"Whose place is it to lock up?" inquired Miss Grace, looking straight at Clive.

"Maurice's, of course," put in Arline; "he's the older; besides, he asked for the boat this afternoon. He's always forgetting."

Clive did not consider it necessary to explain that this night in particular it had been *his* business. Maurice had left the other boys to do an errand for his brother, on the condition that Clive should restore the boat to its place and lock the door.

The lads had met half way home, and were going on together, when Clive suddenly exclaimed, —

"Thunder! I did n't lock up, after all. Run back, like a good fellow; it won't do for us both to be late."

Maurice naturally expostulated; but Clive thrust the key into his hand, and ran ahead, so that Maurice had no choice but to go back.

The family had been some time at the table, when in walked a short, rather stout boy of fifteen.

"Late again, sir," said Uncle Ambrose, sternly. "And so you forgot to lock the boat-house. Remember, if it happens again you boys will not be allowed to take the boat."

"But, uncle," began Maurice, eagerly.

"No excuses, sir," thundered Mr. Lancaster, who was at that time sorely tried with business cares and losses, and whose temper, naturally hasty, was not improved thereby.

Maurice gave one appealing look at Clive, and sank into his seat, red and wrathful. Mrs. Lancaster introduced him to Grace, but he only bowed without speaking, and did not lift his eyes from his plate again during the meal.

"You see how he sulks," whispered Arline to Grace.

But Grace was not so sure. In the flushed face she saw only embarrassment at being reproved before a stranger. Somehow, too, she could not warm toward the handsome Clive, who chatted gayly and did not seem to be at all disturbed by his brother's discomfiture. After tea Clive played and sang for them in the most delightful fashion, and then held skeins of wool for Arline to wind.

Maurice disappeared; and when asked for his brother, Clive replied easily, —

"Oh, he's grinding away, I guess, at his Latin."

"*You* don't have to grind," said Arline, admiringly.

"Well, it comes rather easy to me," replied Clive, with becoming modesty.

As the days passed on, Grace became more and more puzzled at the difference between the two brothers. Clive was so sunny, so ready to please, so accomplished in the many little ways by which the true home-boy may render himself useful. Maurice, on the other hand, was morose — seldom speaking save when addressed — and extremely awkward. He could not hand a thing without dropping it. He could not make his way across the floor without upsetting something.

Still, Grace, who was a keen student of human nature, felt a growing interest in the poor lad. That he was being injured by over fault-finding, ridicule, and snubbing, she firmly believed, and she only desired ardently to find some means of helping him.

The first Sunday after her arrival, Dr. Gaylord exchanged with a stranger, — a young man only recently from the Divinity School. His sermon was on "Chivalry," and he took for its basis "Sir Launfal's Vision." As he went on describing, in fine language, the search of the proud knight for the Holy Grail, his hearers felt irresistibly drawn to the theme. "Each true soul," went on the young preacher, "may search and find the Holy Grail. But he must be first *pure* in heart, as were the keepers of that wondrous cup. If he fails there, — if selfishness, pride, falsehood, impurity, enter into his life, — then the Holy Grail will disappear. As Sir Launfal dropped his pride, and gave of his best to the beggar and the leper that he scorned at first, so must we be humble and brotherly, and Christ himself will come and eat the Holy Supper with his true knights."

Grace at that moment caught a look on Maurice's face that made her heart leap. The heavy frown had cleared away, and a look of high, steadfast resolve was in its place. "How I wish I could get at his heart!" she thought to herself.

During the next week Maurice was as awkward as ever, and as silent, but the dark scowl no longer disfigured his face. He seemed to have some purpose in mind that swayed his whole life. Grace tried to get acquainted with him, but his reserve and shyness were insurmountable.

But a most intense admiration for the beautiful woman had arisen in the hearts of both boys. Grace Stewart was universally adored by every one with whom she came in contact. Mrs. Lancaster, worn and fretted by her many cares, and her six delicate little children in the nursery, declared Grace's influence to be like that of sweet music, or lovely pictures.

Grace had noticed Maurice lingering often over a certain book in the library; and one day, as he threw it down hastily in answer to his uncle's call, she saw on the cover the name of James Russell Lowell, and it opened readily to "Sir Launfal's Vision." Grace thought a great deal those days.

The month's report had been sent in from the boys' teacher. Clive ranked very high, Maurice was below average. Mr. Lancaster indulged in several savage sarcasms at the lad's expense. "I shall send this card to your father, sir," he said, "that he may know what a donkey his oldest son is; if you had worked faithfully you need not have been distanced by your younger brother."

Maurice's face was something terrible to see. The great veins swelled out on his forehead, his eyes flashed, and he looked more like an enraged lion than a human being. He gave one look of indignant scorn to his brother, then turning to Mr. Lancaster, said furiously, "At least, sir, I am not a sneak," and rushed out of the room, nearly upsetting wee Dolly in his way.

"What a temper!" sighed Aunt Martha, helplessly.

"He's an uncivilized young brute," said Mr. Lancaster, indignantly.

Arline looked curiously at Grace, and for once in her life showed some real penetration.

"I do believe, Grace, your sympathies are with that boy."

"Indeed they are," replied Grace, warmly, "and I think he is very cruelly used." Then she hurried away, leaving her listeners struck with astonishment. She hunted the house over, but no Maurice was to be found.

"He went up garwet," lisped a little toddler at the nursery door.

So up garret Grace went, and at last found Maurice sitting on an old trunk, his face buried in his hands. She sat down beside him, and putting her arms about his neck, drew the rough boy head down on her lap. Not a word was said, but her gentle hand on his hot forehead was better than words. He trembled all over, and burst into a flood of tears.

"My poor boy," said Grace, tenderly, "you are hard beset, and my heart is aching for you. How can human beings act so cruelly?"

"O Miss Grace, I do try so hard, but my head is so thick I *can't* learn," said the poor fellow.

"I know you try. You are my brave little knight, Sir Gawain; you will find the Holy Grail some day."

He started and sobbed despairingly. "Oh, that is the worst. I have been angry and impatient. I can never be a true knight while I fail to control my terrible temper."

"But you must be *my* little knight, Maurice, dear," she said kindly. "I believe in you, and I will help you. See, you shall wear my colors to remind you of your purpose," and she took the dainty silken knot from her throat and pinned it inside his jacket. "Let the white remind you of purity, the blue of tender love for the oppressed, and let the rosy pink be ambition that leads us always to do the best."

"I will," said Maurice, with the look of the young conqueror on his face.

After this Maurice was a new being. He grew easier, more sociable, more cheerful. Every one noticed it, and as Arline saucily said, "gave Grace the credit of taming the bear," for Grace had shown in many ways her interest in the queer lad.

Clive, on the other hand, grew unaccountably nervous and irritable. He seemed unhappy, and no one could find out what the matter was.

At last, one day an explosion came. Mr. Lancaster came home with a face like a thunder-cloud.

"Boys," said he, "have either of you been into Joe Barney's saloon?"

"I should think not!" cried Arline, indignantly; "our boys would n't disgrace themselves by entering that low gambling den."

"Professor Wilde said he saw *you* go in there yesterday, Maurice."

"Yes, sir; I went in there," replied Maurice, steadily.

"Why did you go?"

"I went to pay some money."

"So the son of Professor Lancaster is a gambler, and associates with gamesters and drunkards," said Mr. Lancaster, with bitter emphasis.

A dark flush arose on Maurice's face. "I never gambled or betted in all my life, and I never was in the place but that once," he said proudly.

"Why did you pay money to Barney, then?"

Maurice hesitated, set his face firmly, and replied, —

"I cannot tell you, sir."

"Cannot tell *me!*" demanded Uncle Ambrose, furiously. "Do you suppose I 'm going to have a nephew of mine mixed up in such doings, and then refuse to explain?"

"I cannot explain, sir; but I am innocent of what you charge me."

Mr. Lancaster stormed and threatened, argued and pleaded, but the lad was firm. At last he said in despair, —

"Very well, sir, Professor Wilde has decided to expel any pupil who has been at Barney's. Go to your room, and stay there until you comply with my wishes."

The lad looked in his uncle's face for some signs of relenting, then turning suddenly, left the room.

Clive, who stood looking after him, had a strange expression on his face.

Grace saw it, and going up to him, said in a low voice, with significant emphasis, —

"Perhaps *you* can explain this matter, Clive?"

"I?" said he, in angry confusion, "you insult me, Miss Grace."

"I think you 're too bad, Grace," said Arline, crying; "you seem to have a spite against poor Clive, and you think that bear Maurice is perfection."

Grace only sighed and turned away.

In the mean time Maurice sat in his room in the deepest despair. Very dark and cheerless seemed the young life.

Presently Clive came in. He marched up to his brother, seized his hand, and cried, "You 're a trump, old fellow; a glorious brick. I can never repay you."

"Yes, you can, — own up," said Maurice, eagerly.

"Maurice, I cannot, it would *kill* me. Remember, you promised."

"Oh, yes, I 'll keep my promise, but you little know what it costs me," said the poor boy.

"Say, it won't be so bad after a while; uncle is mad just now. *I* cannot tell, they think so well of me."

"And I have no reputation to lose," said Maurice, bitterly. "I 'll keep my promise."

Clive lingered awhile, attempting lame efforts at consolation.

At last Maurice said fiercely, "Clive Lancaster, go away; there is but *one* thing you can do for me;" and Clive fled in confusion, leaving the lad to his own despairing thoughts.

Just at nightfall a soft tap sounded at the door. He did not hear it, and the next moment Grace stole in. "Maurice, dear, keep up good heart; I believe in you, my own good boy."

This was too much for the lad; he threw himself on the bed and cried as if his heart would break, and in an unchildlike, despairing way that frightened her. She did not try to wrest his secret from him, but did her best to soothe, and begged him to eat the nice supper she had brought.

Maurice tried to please her, but his head ached painfully; there was a strange sensation in his limbs; he felt ill and giddy.

"You had better go right to bed," advised Grace, taking up the tray. "Courage, Maurice, it will come right;" and she kissed him as tenderly as if he were not believed to be unworthy by almost the entire household.

After she left him the lad tossed to and fro, harassed by conflicting emotions. "Oh, I cannot bear it, I have borne so much," was his bitter cry. He felt almost as if he hated his brother.

Then in the half delirium of approaching illness strange sights and sounds seemed to pass before him. He rode out with Sir Launfal into the fair summer morning. He stood with him on that winter eve when he again sought his home, weary and baffled in his search for the Holy Grail. He heard the beggar's thanks and saw his grateful looks as he received the alms of the now humble knight. Then the scene changed. He stood under the starlit sky in a strange desert land. Before him was a knightly form clad in armor, and under the raised visor gleamed a young face, whose sweetness and high courage were like sunshine to the weary heart.

"Dear Maurice, my little brother, do not falter," the deep, sweet voice said, and one hand clasped the youth's own. "Whoever finds the Holy Grail must search for it through ways that are hard and weary."

"Oh!" cried the lad, "am I really on the way to it? I am so tired, and everything seems hard. How can I bear to be thought wrong when I have done no wrong?"

"Dear boy, he who would find the Holy Grail must first learn to bear misunderstanding and wrong. Did not our dear Master continually suffer wrong from the hands of an ignorant and selfish world?"

"But my own brother, is it well for him to cover his sin?"

"He shall never find peace until he confess and forsake it," replied the knight, solemnly. "He is still too weak to be a man, but your forbearance will lead him as nothing else can. Bear patiently, Maurice, until that time comes."

Maurice looked at him earnestly, and a sudden light broke over his mind. "You are Sir Gawain, he who found the Holy Grail," he cried.

"That they called me in life," said the knight; "and I, Gawain, bid you be of good cheer. It is by purity, by sacrifice, by the bearing of another's burdens that the soul becomes truly knightly." Then, as the youth knelt, he hit him with his sword three times in the olden fashion, saying, "Sir Maurice, I dub thee knight of the Red Cross. Go forth in God's name, and thou shalt surely find the Holy Cup."

When Maurice arose, he was alone under the silent stars, but a new strength and peace had been given him. "I will bear it for the Lord," he cried, lifting up his arms to heaven. "Help me to keep my vows." Then he knew no more.

The November days wore away, but there were heavy hearts in the Lancaster family. Maurice lay in the grasp of a terrible, destroying fever, from which it often seemed he would never arise. The night came when the crisis would evidently take place.

"Dr. Snow," begged the wretched Clive, as he waylaid the busy man in the hall, "will he die?"

"Likely enough; got something on his mind," was the gruff reply.

Clive stood like one turned to stone. Then he slowly retraced his steps to the sitting-room, where the anxious family was assembled. With downcast eyes he confessed his sin; how he had gone to Barney's with other schoolboys, betted, lost money, been wretched in consequence. Finally he had told Maurice, who promised to restore the money and keep his secret, provided he would never go there again. "And it was there he caught the fever; Barney is down with it himself. He will die, and it is my fault;" and Clive threw himself down on the sofa in his despair.

The family were aghast, as they well might be, but the presence of a common anxiety made them very tender. They did their best to comfort Clive, and all watched for the turning of the tide.

Maurice did not die; slowly he crept back into the world that would henceforth be a sweeter place to him.

His first visitor was his brother, who simply kissed his hand and whispered, "All right, old fellow, I 've owned up." That alone gave Maurice new strength and courage.

Christmas Day dawned sunny and inspiring, with its clear bells echoing over the newly fallen snow. Maurice for the first time was carried to the holly-decked parlor, and in the hall beyond a band of his own school-mates sang most sweetly the dear old carols. Many gifts lay about him, each child cousin bashfully bringing her little offering. Many tender words had been spoken by those once so prejudiced and cold. Maurice sat with his father's letter in his hand. "I am proud of you, my son," it had ended.

Then Clive stole to him, handing him a framed picture, an ideal head of Sir Gawain in armor.

"You deserve it; you *are* brave," he said humbly. "O Maurice, help *me* to be a true knight," and the brothers met for the first time in a truly fraternal embrace.

> "God rest you, merry gentlemen,
> Let nothing you dismay,"

sang the High School boys blithely. And Maurice felt gratefully that dismay was indeed passed for him. And in the joy of that new Christmas, in love and humility, he pledged himself anew to search for the Holy Grail.

JUST as the hand of a dyer that has been working with crimson will be crimson; just as the hand that has been holding fragrant perfumes will be perfumed; so my faith, which is only the hand by which I lay hold on precious things, will take the tincture and the fragrance of what it grasps.

THE reward of a thing well done is to have done it.

For Youngest Readers.

DONALD'S SAND-MILL.

BY LUCY WHEELOCK.

He was only four years old, and the world seemed very big and wonderful to him. There were so many things which he did not know, that he was always asking questions. Mamma and auntie and sister could not begin to answer them all. One day mamma said, —

"Really, Donald, I can't answer any more *why* questions."

"Why can't you answer any more *why* questions?" asked the little fellow.

"I am tired out, thinking so hard and talking so much," said mamma. "I must send you to a Kindergarten."

Donald did not know what that was; but when he tried it the next day he found it very nice. He liked the little playmates, the live turtle in a jar of water, and, best of all, the box of sand, where he could lay out beautiful gardens and build lighthouses. The second day he woke up at six o'clock, and called out, —

"I want to get up quick, mamma; I'm 'fraid I'll be late for the *Tinderdarden*."

And he was unhappy because he could not go on Saturday and Sunday.

At first he asked so many *whats* and *whys* that Miss May did not know what to do; but by and by, when he began to think about things himself, there were not so many questions.

The happy days passed by, and it was only two weeks to Christmas.

Miss May called her children around her, and told them about the little people in the Children's Hospital. "Some of them are so ill," she said, "that they cannot leave their beds, and they have very few toys and picture-books to amuse them all the long days. And they will not have a single Christmas present unless kind people remember them."

Then she proposed that they should fill a Christmas box for the Hospital.

"If you want to have a merry Christmas yourself," Miss May said, "the very best way is to make somebody else happy; and if you should give one of your very best playthings, you may be sure it will make one of those poor little ones happier than something which you do not care for yourself."

When Miss May said that, Donald thought at once of his sand-mill; but of course she could not mean that. It was his newest toy, and he loved it better than anything.

The other children began to tell what they would bring, and were willing to promise anything; but Donald sat very still, and was silent. He kept thinking of his sand-mill. He could hardly eat his dinner, he was so eager to see if it was really safe. He rushed up to the play-room. Yes, it was there still, and he set the little man at work immediately. He had never turned so fast or looked so cunning! "It makes *me* happier," he sighed, as he poured in more sand. Then he called out, "Mamma, do you s'pose they'd like a Noah's Ark?"

"Who is *they?*" asked mamma.

"Why, the children in the Hospital."

"Oh, yes," said mamma, who was counting stitches.

"Well, I'll give that," said the child, slowly.

The next morning he carried the Noah's Ark to school. He looked rather sober, and without a word put the toy on the table.

"What a good toy for a sick child who has to stay in bed!" said Miss May, kindly, when she saw it. Donald's face lighted up; but a shade came over it as he passed by the sand-box, and was reminded of the little miller.

That afternoon he did not care much to play with anything, and was so quiet that mamma began to feel anxious. He set all his playthings out in a row, and looked them over. "Do you s'pose they'd like my tin *shoulders?*" he asked at length. Donald never could say, "soldiers."

"Yes," said mamma, who understood this time. "It will amuse them to stand the soldiers up."

And so the tin soldiers, and later a blue express wagon, were added to the heap of toys on Miss May's table. But still Donald was not happy; he could not find an easy place anywhere.

Friday he came downstairs when it was school-time with the precious mill in his little arms.

"What?" said mamma, in surprise; "your sand-mill? I thought you liked that better than anything."

"Well, I did," said the little boy, with a half-sob; "but she said *the very best*."

"You are a good boy," said mamma, as she kissed him and turned away quickly to rub something out of her eyes.

The children shouted when they saw the sand-mill. It was bigger and handsomer than anything else on the table, and Donald felt all at once that he was the happiest boy in the whole town. But he felt happier still, the day after Christmas, when mamma took him to visit the Hospital, and he saw a group of children laughing and clapping their hands as they watched a lame boy pour sand into that very mill.

"Isn't it jolly?" he heard the lame boy say.

THE BEAUTIFUL DOLL.

BY ELLA F. STROCLIN.

One Christmas morning, when I was about seven years old, I found sitting on the parlor table a magnificent doll, about as large as my pet cat. I took her in my arms, and oh, how beautiful she was! Her delicate wax features were very sweet to look at, — eyes of celestial blue, cheeks and lips like cherries, complexion as pure as paint could make it. Her hair hung in natural curls.

She was dressed in blue velvet embroidered with gold thread. Her underclothing was made of the finest linen, trimmed with real thread lace. Open-work stockings and blue kid shoes adorned her legs and feet.

After looking at her for some time, pressing her to my heart, and telling her of my love, — it was true love at first sight, — I spied my stocking full of goodies, hanging near, with a letter pinned on the outside. I eagerly tore open the large envelope. It was from "Santa Claus," written in large printed letters, so plain that I could read every word.

It read as follows: —

Dear Little Girl, — This doll is the daughter of the queen of German Fairies. She has travelled across the Atlantic Ocean, and is the most accomplished young lady of her size in the world. She can stand and sit alone, keep her hands or arms folded or extended, as you desire; if handled too roughly, perhaps she will cry. When you put her to bed, she will close her eyes in sleep, and will be always ready to take a walk, if you wind up the little arrangement in her back.

Remember, she belongs to the royal family, and has always lived in a crystal palace.

Yours with love,

"Santa Claus."

You can imagine my happiness when I learned all these wonderful things in regard to my darling. I immediately exercised her in walking, crying, etc. My excitement lasted all day; it was with difficulty I could be coaxed to eat the Christmas dinner.

At dark I concluded to undress her and put her in my own bed. After doing so, I sat in a little rocking-chair thinking of my doll's charms (by the way, I had named her "Lulu"), and praying that she might speak, when suddenly the sound of coughing came to my ears. I flew to the bed-side; and, to my astonishment, Lulu sat up, opened her eyes, and asked in a small voice how it happened that she could speak. I told her that I had prayed that she might speak, and that God had answered my prayer.

She then told me in loving whispers how happy she had been during the day, and that she loved her new mamma. She said the house where she had lived was made of ice crystals; that her queen mamma was no bigger than herself; that "Santa Claus" had stolen her from her mother. My house, she said, was warmer than her mother's, and she was glad that "Santa Claus" had stolen her. She then inquired all about my family and friends, and asked about everything in the room.

I cannot describe the bliss of that hour. I told my doll that it was too good to be true, and doubtless something would occur to spoil our happiness. Alas! no sooner had I said that than I awoke, and found it nothing but a dream.

Christmas in the Woods.

LENNY'S CHRISTMAS.

BY ANNIE E. PURINTON.

T 'S Mrs. Mahony's Lenny! And shure she 's in a dead faint!" said Michael O'Conner to the assembled crowd that so quickly congregate in a city street. Some one had been run over. No one knew how it had happened. A policeman had just sent for the city ambulance, when Michael pushed through the crowd and identified the child.

"Stan' out the way! — I 'll carry 'er home," he said, stooping over the inanimate form.

Lenny gave a groan The pain was terrible. But it was not until they had laid her on her bed at home that she opened her eyes. Then she could tell very little of the accident. She was crossing the street when something came tearing behind her. In a moment she was pushed down; something rolled over her; and then she knew nothing more.

The doctor came, and gravely examined her. "The hurt is not too deep for my reaching," he said at last, with an air of relief. "Fortunately, she has only broken her leg."

"Fortunately," — Maggie Mahony opened her eyes wide at that, and looked in surprise at the doctor. A broken leg was a very serious matter to her.

"It might have been a great deal worse. She came near breaking her neck," said the doctor.

"Faith, sur, I thank ye kindly for ye trouble," said Maggie, perhaps with a dim feeling that it was the doctor that had spared the child. She gave him an old-fashioned courtesy as he left the room.

She got behind the door and wiped the tears from her eyes. Then she came and leaned over Lenny, and prayed the saints "to watch over and bliss the darlint."

Maggie, with her husband, Tim Mahony, lived on the ground floor of a tenement-house in "Stone Alley." Tim was truckman down on Commercial Street; while Maggie did her share in making a penny by taking in washing.

If ever there was a nice woman it was Mrs. Mahony. She had n't an idle bone in her body, and she was as cheerful as she was busy. The sight of her rosy-cheeked, broad, good-humored face was enough to cure the most obstinate case of the blues. Her sleeves were apt to be tucked up to the elbow, showing dimpled white arms that were always ready for work. No one could ever find a speck of dirt in her rooms. The shining tins on the kitchen dresser glistened in the sunshine, and the polished stove could almost serve as a looking-glass.

She and Tim had lived there ever since they were married, happy and contented as a pair of young robins. Once a blue-eyed baby, the counterpart of Maggie, came to make the home still brighter; but it was only lent for a little while. Neither motherly wisdom nor motherly love was strong enough to keep her; and poor Maggie was left only with the precious memory that made her sweeter and gentler to every other child.

"She wa 'n't real thriving; but I s'pose you 'll miss her bad," said Billy Lamont, the upper-story tenant, as one day he saw Maggie putting away the empty cradle. And Maggie did "miss her bad;" but she did n't parade her agony of grief. She never forgot the child; but she courageously looked up rather than down. Human nature is n't large enough to sympathize with a continual mourner; and she had too healthy a body to spend her life in sighing.

It was a year after that Lenny came to them. One cold, blustering winter's night Mr. and Mrs. Mahony were comfortably seated near their own kitchen fire. Tim, with a good-natured scowl, was figuring up his month's account. "A jug of buttermilk — and a quart of cranberries — two dozen eggs," he said, slowly spelling out his bill.

"A jug of buttermilk! How ye talk! And shure it was Mrs. Feeler herself that gave me the buttermilk. The mane man to charge it!" said Maggie, bending over her husband's chair in indignant surprise.

The wind howled outside; the door rattled, — there was no obstruction either by bolt or bar; the latch lifted. But neither heard. The jug of buttermilk was a domestic poser over which both were absorbed.

"Faith, an' it 's the man that 'll be chating us!" said Tim.

"It 's a quil to his maneness," declared Maggie, turning to give the fire a poke.

But the poker fell with a bang on the hearth. Maggie gave a little scream. The door was wide open, and standing on the threshold was a tangled-haired child in a torn cotton dress, bare-headed and bare-footed. With a kind of fascination she stood looking at the warm fire, eager to come within its range, yet too frightened to make a bold dash.

"And shure, Tim, it 's our blissed angel come to earth again!" cried Maggie. And in another instant she had her folded in her arms, covering her with kisses.

But Tim knew better. He knew their blessed angel was neither houseless nor homeless. "Gone to glory, gone to glory," he had sung too often to believe in any such transformation. He looked at the child from head to foot. He had never seen her before. "There 's an owner for her somewhere; but it would n't be civil, nor yet nathural, to turn her out such a night as this," he said meditatively. "But I 'll be afther finding the mother," taking out his short clay pipe as he spoke, and laying it carefully on the mantelpiece. Then he took from the nail his cap, and went out.

But alas! it was the same old story so common in the city. The mother lay dead in the attic above. Disease and want had taken from Lenny the only protector she ever knew. By some good fortune — was it chance or fate? — the child had wandered downstairs. The light under the door attracted her eye. Outside the wind was rising; it made her shiver. The line of light seemed to be her only refuge. Standing on tiptoe, she lifted the latch; and the door flew open, never again to shut upon her as a stranger and alien.

When Maggie heard the story of the orphan, there was no need to appeal to her sympathy. The childless mother was as soft-hearted a soul as ever lived. She loved her from the moment she took her into her arms. She filled the vacant place in her heart as well as her home.

Lenny was thirteen when the accident happened. I think, as a rule, children are courageous under pain; and could they add patience to their courage, they would serve as examples for older people to follow. But patience is a hard virtue for children to learn. At first Lenny made desperate efforts to carry out the doctor's wishes. But with the young different whims follow each other very rapidly. From being amiable she became irritable, and thought it could n't have been much worse to have broken all her bones. At this stage reflection was intolerable, and not being like the good little girl in the story-book, her laughter at one moment was apt to be followed by a sob.

"Deed, then, that 'll never do. There 's throuble enough ahead without being so ginerous with your tears now," said Maggie, looking up from the ironing-table with a glance of disapproval. "It 's the silliest thing a body can do to cry over things that can't be cured by salt wather. I 'll be afther finding something to occupy your mind. It 's time for ye to be larning how to be useful," she said cheerily, clapping a long piece of lace that she was clear-starching. Then Maggie struck up a tune that kept time with her clapping, — something about "Will ye come, my pretty bonny lass, over the wather to me?"

But even that could not quite comfort Lenny. Was n't next week the blessed Christmas time? And had n't she and Maggie made all their arrangements to pass a fortnight with Maggie's only brother, who lived in New Hampshire? She had never been in the country in the winter. She had been dreaming of it every day, and almost every hour, since she had got the letter. "Bring along the little gurl. She won't care much for an ould man like me; but we 'll show her the country, where there are great white snowballs in the streets for the pickin', and coastin' the loike of which she never saw."

Lenny held her breath at the very thought of it. It all seemed like fairyland to her; and her imagination went far, far beyond the reality. No wonder she opened very reluctant eyes to the fact that the snowballs must remain unpicked, and that her coast must be limited to the boundary of four walls.

But day by day, as she grew stronger, she grew more philosophical. It was pleasanter when she could be washed and dressed and brought out to lie upon the chintz-covered lounge close by the ironing-table, where she could watch Maggie at her work. There was much fine ironing to be done. Mrs. Dodd's beautiful frilled wrapper had to be fluted with so much care that Maggie in her anxiety pinned her fingers in the fluting-iron instead of the cambric. She gave a scream of pain, and would have dropped the iron, only she remembered in time that it would fall on the fold of the dress that lay upon the floor; so with a reckless disregard for pain she finished the whole ruffle. She held the dress up with some pride. "A nater piece of work I never did." Then she clapped it on the clothes-horse, and stooping down, with housewifely care she put her irons upon the hearth.

"I 'll be carrying the dress home now," she said, "and stop at the market, and put me eye on the plumpest turkey I can find for me little gurl's Christmas dinner."

But before she went she rolled Lenny up to the window. "Ye look so rosy the neighbors will say that Lenny is well," said Maggie, bestowing an extra caress upon her.

"But it is n't the same thing as being well," said Lenny, fretfully.

"No, it 's different; but perhaps the change will do her good, afther all," she replied, with her cheerful voice.

It was while Lenny was sitting there by the window that Billy Megee looked up, and gave her a good-natured nod. Perhaps it was the rosy cheeks, or perhaps it was the wistful brown eye, that made him hesitate. He paused a moment, then suddenly turned and disappeared.

Billy was a little boot-black who plied his trade with a good deal of energy at the corner of the street. On account of a certain shrewd commonsense, and having a turn for humor, Billy was a favorite among his customers, who regularly patronized him morning after morning. His tongue wagged as swiftly as his hands, and he was always pretty sure of an audience. The men listened while their patience lasted, and then flung him their pennies, looking down at their boots to see if in the child's volubility he had failed to put on the proper amount of shine. But practice had made Billy a good workman, and he could have blacked boots perfectly with his eyes shut.

"Helloa, Lenny! Pretty well to-day?" And Billy burst into Lenny's room without even knocking. His manners, what little he had, were apt to slip from him when he was eager to accomplish anything.

"I've brought ye somethin', — somethin' for Christmas," feeling himself the embodiment of importance as he put his parcel in Lenny's lap.

"O Billy!" Lenny gave a scream of delight as she pushed back the paper, and saw the fragrant blossoms of the tea-rose nodding at her. "O Billy!"

Billy's eyes twinkled, though he affected to be indifferent to her delight. "Lors, that ain't nothin'. I might ha' brought you a dozen more," he said, jingling something in his pocket. Billy's good nature indicated that he had had a successful day. Presently he displayed two shining quarters. "Ye see I've ben in luck to-day."

Lenny saw, and thanked the friendly spirit that prompted him to divide the luck with her.

"Early this morning old 'Acre-Lot' came up for a shine." (It is needless to say that Billy had his particular name for every customer.) "He was rather grumpy, — 'specting the weather would be the death of him, and that sort of talk, ye know. I can tell ye he was cross. Looked like this," he said, pulling down the corners of his mouth into an ugly curve. "'I say, old man, the Lord put too much of ye on the ground for this cold climate,' I sez to myself just by way of entertainment. 'What?' sez he, bending forward, as if I had spoken to him. 'The Lord put too much of ye on the ground!' I shouted, feeling a little frightened-like at my words. But the old feller seemed pleased. 'Ay, ay,' he said, shaking his head and laughing. Then he fumbled in his pocket, and took out a silver dollar. 'There, off wid ye; that's for your Christmas,' sez he. And off I went, only just waiting to say 'I thank ye, sur,' with a touch of me cap. Then to-night I saw ye sittin' sort of lonesome-like up at the window. So sez I to myself, "I'll share me Christmas;' and there it is," he said, with a pardonable sense of pride at his generosity.

It was perhaps no disadvantage to Lenny in her own mind at that moment that she was lame. The flowers nodded at her with a strong sense of companionship, and Billy had remembered her.

"One good turn deserves another," said Maggie the next morning, as she carefully laid Lenny on the lounge. "It's aisy enough to guess that Billy Megee would get a good trouncing, if his mother found out his extravigince. It would n't be amiss to do some favor for him, — hey, Lenny?"

But Lenny was too much absorbed to answer. Three buds had blossomed since she had left the tea-rose on the window-sill last night. It seemed to have grown, like Jack's bean-stalk, in the night. She paid but little attention to Maggie as she unpacked the market-basket that contained the Christmas goodies. The big turkey for her "little gurl" she brought out last. With infinite delight she held it up to Lenny, and punched in its fat sides to test its quality.

"There 's plenty to kape and plenty to lend," she said gayly; "and could n't we bliss the Lord better if we asked a few to help us?"

"Mebbe we could," assented Lenny. And then she looked up suddenly, — "Why, Billy Megee, of course!"

"That we will," said Maggie, heartily. "And if Billy Megee, why not Teddy O'Conner? A hot bite will do no harrum to him and Dolly McFadden, bless her little heart! I would n't feel just aisy thinking they were hungry. Somehow, I'm thinking they know nothing about the Holy Child," said Maggie, half sorrowfully. "They never knew he lived; they never knew he was born, or how he died. And it was for the loike of them that he came. They never can receive him until they know him."

"And the Widow Hennessy," said Lenny, cheerfully, as she saw the cloud on Maggie's honest face, and knew her simple heart was full of pity.

"Yes, yes! She 'll be lonely-like come Christmas, — though, to be shure, she 's a dale more indepindent thin with poor shiftless Pat. But pace to the poor crature's soul. He 's better off, as well as she, if she 'd only be thinking it 's good luck he 's only gone to the ould country first."

Christmas Day came, and with it the invited guests. Lenny was greatly delighted; for they were all friends. And who can tell of the eager excitement of the children, who from time to time were allowed to look into the kitchen-oven and see the well-stuffed turkey that Maggie carefully basted and wisely turned from side to side, — "just to get the coloring even," she said? No one noticed that little Dolly's apron covered a very ragged dress, or that the sleeves of Billy Megee's jacket were nearly up to his elbows. I am sorry to say that Teddy's face was not very clean; but Maggie soon remedied that by giving him a basin of water and a fresh towel. The kitchen put on quite a festive air; some sprigs of holly in an old china jar adorned the mantelpiece, and in the windows hung wreaths of evergreen. In the middle of the room stood the round table covered with a spotless cloth and a napkin for each one. The widow declared that the smell of onions and cabbage was "the swatest smell on earth," and they all agreed with her. Though the widow had been ailing for years, her digestive organs rallied at the sight of a good dinner; and as she stood helping Maggie peel the big potatoes, her Irish heart glowed, and her memory carried her back to the green grass of Ireland, with the little potato-patch growing behind the tumble-down shanty. She forgot that she was cold and hungry and dirty then. At that moment it looked like an enchanted picture.

"Then they all sat or stood,
To eat and to drink,
And every one said what he happened to think,"

after the fashion of Cock Robin's wedding. There was such a glow on the faces of the children, such a brightness in the room, and Tim told such funny stories! Ah, what a happy company! The crowning triumph was the mince pie, with its flaky crust that rustled like dry leaves, and its juicy brown filling that melted on the tongue. They were all abundantly satisfied. They heard the sweet chime-bells ringing out merrily that "Christ was born;" and Maggie, with the sun shining on her head and the sun shining in her heart, told the old, old story, which was new and strange to her listeners. "And it was for the loike of us that the little baby was born," she said.

It did n't matter that while the story was being told, overcome by the heat and good dinner, the widow sat nodding with her head low upon her breast. It did n't matter that the china was poor and coarse, that there was no pretension to gentility, and that these simple people were lacking in many of the refinements of life. The loving eye that looked down and saw them, saw only honest hearts, throbbing with gratitude as they listened to the story of the child Jesus, who was born in a manger. Love again had wrought a miracle; and on the humble wall seemed to be written the name of Christ and his own words: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me."

OUR CHRISTMAS-NUMBER.

Christmas stories and Christmas pictures have carried everything before them. "History and Biography" have politely left our columns; for at Christmas-time we think of only *one* biography, and the history we love to read is the dear old story of the first Christmas-morn. Our "Letter-Box" has disappeared; but the youngest readers will find a double supply of Christmas stories to take its place. We open this time no "Leaves from Nature's Book;" for Nature now seems filled with the sights and sounds of Christmas. The very trees of the woods are all Christmas-trees, and the keen winter air resounds with the songs of Peace and Good Will.

The Editor had more stories and more pictures than he could use in a single number of Every Other Sunday. One or two of the shorter stories may appear later, and the pictures will keep for another season. It is pleasant to announce that the interesting German picture on page 61 was a gift to our paper from Mr. Reich, the picture-dealer of Cincinnati, who sent it with greetings to all the children. The reader will find a good deal more in this "Christmas in the Woods" than appears at first sight. Let each one look at it long and carefully, and find out for himself what it contains. The cuts on page 64 tell their own story. The frontispiece of this number is a beautiful engraving of one of Raphael's Madonnas. It is called *Madonna della Tenda*, that is, the "Madonna of the Curtain," so named because of the curtain in the background of the scene. These Madonna pictures show us something more than the devout and lovely mother of Jesus, the infant Saviour, and the baby Saint John. They make us feel that every loving mother is dear in the sight of God, and that all sweet and innocent children are sons and daughters of the one Heavenly Father. A Christmas feeling should come into every heart whenever a "child is born;" and we should give to children everywhere the gifts of our love even as the Wise Men of old brought precious gifts to the Child Jesus.

But the best use to make of this Christmas Number of our paper is to learn by heart the lessons of the stories and of the pictures, and then keep a *real* Christmas of love and kindness in our daily lives. So doing, we shall have a Christmas not once a year only, but all the year and through all the years.

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HOW THE MOON GOT HER HALO.

A Christmas Story.

BY MRS. H. R. SHATTUCK.

THE short winter day is over. The sun, so unwilling to give any warmth all through the day, has finally gone to bed behind the range of white hills. Just for a minute he leaves a glow of fire on the clouds, as a sort of good-by, and then the gray twilight shuts down.

It is very cold. The frost fairies begin to trace their pictures on the window-panes, and the men and women are hurrying homeward, shutting close the doors and putting more wood on the fire. The babies are cuddled up warm in their mammas' arms, or tucked snugly down under the blankets. Even the kitties are glad to stay in and warm their toes by the fire. Nobody wants to be out of doors to-night.

Nobody, did I say? Yes, there is somebody, — the moon! As the sun goes down, she peeps above the horizon, just as round as he is, and almost as warm. Certainly she is a great deal more rosy and jolly than he has been to-day. *She* is happy to be out of doors to-night, for it is one of the longest nights of the year, the sun is gone, and she can reign supreme. Up out of the blue water she comes, slowly sailing up the eastern sky, — queen of the night and of the stars. And how lovely is the world she sees beneath her, — the rolling ships and gleaming lighthouses, the long, quiet beaches, the glistening hills and the frozen rivers, and, best of all, the city. Here the moon sees many strange sights, and it is a long time before she discovers why it is that all the houses where the rich folks live are so wonderfully lighted up. Then she remembers that it is Christmas-eve. The rich people are having parties and Christmas-trees for their children. The churches, too, are illuminated; and the people are going back and forth, running fast to keep warm, but laden with baskets and bundles and lanterns and rocking-horses and dolls and baby-carriages and trumpets and drums and books and whips and cornucopias of candy and bright-colored glass globes and festoons of evergreen and of curiously cut paper, all to adorn the trees for the children.

This makes the moon happy; for she knows what Christmas means, and she is glad when the people remember it. She smiles brightly, but suddenly grows very sober, for she sees something that ought not to happen on Christmas-eve.

A little girl, very small and very thinly clad, her bare feet and hands blue with the dreadful cold, is kneeling on the top of the marble steps of one of the houses and trying to look through the curtains at the warmth and happiness within. She cannot see very much, but the little she can see is so beautiful that she almost forgets her cold and hunger. Suddenly the door opens, and a man comes out. He is dressed like the men she has seen on the tops of fine carriages, and he carries a whip in his hand. The child jumps up in fear; and then the man, who had not seen her till then, seizes her by the arm, and threatening to strike her if she does n't "clear out," thrusts her off the steps into the street. Oh, how dreadful, how dreadful it is! The moon hides her face behind a cloud, and the whole world grows dark.

A minute later she looks forth. Where is the child now? The door is still open, and a flood of light streams out over the snow. The doorway is crowded with people, and down at the bottom of the steps kneels a beautiful little girl. She is talking to the poor child and trying to make her stop crying; for the rough man had hurt her, and her cry of pain had been heard by the company in the parlor. A finely dressed lady hurries down the steps, saying, "Mabel, Mabel, come back!" and then she beckons to the coachman to come and take that ragged child away. But Mabel clings fast to the little girl's hand; and as the lady, with a stern look, bends over her, she says, "Why, mamma, she is crying! and see how she shivers. Please let me take her into the parlor." And then, as her mother still frowns, she cries, "Mamma, *you* would n't like to be out here in the cold." The mother is silent; and Mabel, helping the child to rise, leads her through the crowd of people into the beautiful room, where there is light and warmth and food and joy. And it is for her, — the poor little waif! She can hardly believe it. Oh, how beautiful, how beautiful it is! The moon looks through the parted curtains and sees the two happy little girls and the people around them, led by the love of the child to see what Christmas-eve really means.

"Yes, it is something more than presents and Christmas-trees and a good time," says the smiling moon. She says it so loud that the stars hear and nod back to her. "Yes, indeed," say they. And the little white cloud, sailing by on the wind, catches the moon's happy smile, turns it into rainbows, and makes a halo round her kindly face.